

Abstract of the Invention

An automated system and process for managing paper files, particularly medical records contained in file folders and the like, in a file storage system having a predetermined size or limited expansion capacity. A shelf manager system includes a computer program and database which tracks the thickness of individual file folders, the capacity of storage shelf sections, and the percentage of free space remaining in each shelf section. The thickness of each file folder is measured whenever the file folder enters or leaves the primary file storage facility. File folder thickness is computed by weighing the file on an electronic scale or other caliper-based measure device. When occupied shelf space exceeds a threshold percentage for a shelf section, file folders are purged according to the likelihood that certain files will not be requested in the future by applying purging algorithms to the individual files. In an alternative embodiment, document image scanning provides multiple copies of pertinent file information to fulfill multiple pending file requests. In another alternative embodiment, the file folders include radio frequency identification tags for passive detection of file folder identification. In a still further alternative embodiment, data from the shelf manager system controls a digital printing press to create direct print color-coded file folders for use with the shelf manager system.